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WEEKLY STATION REPORTS

OF THE DIVISION OF

DRY LAND AGRICULTURE

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FEB 1934

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REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY, 1934.

HAVRE: (Report for the months of January and February, 1934.)

January was warm. The mean temperature was 28°, or 14.8° above the normal. Below zero readings were recorded on the first three days and again on the 23rd and 24th. The minimum was above freezing only one night during the month. Precipitation at the station amounted to 0.16 inch as compared to a normal of 0.72 inch. The average wind velocity of 9.7 miles per hour was high for the month. There were fourteen days with an average of 10 miles per hour or more, with an average of 18.5 on the 25th. February was also decidedly warm and dry. There were three days with a minimum below zero, -16° on the 26th being the coldest. Only 0.05 inch of precipitation was recorded. The minimums for the last two days of the month were above freezing. Wind velocity for the month averaged 6.5 miles per hour, with only three days when the velocity was over 10 miles per hour. There was practically no damage from soil blowing. The soil at the end of the month was frozen for a few inches owing to the few days of cold weather just preceding. Winter grains seem to be in very good condition. It is feared that there is considerable damage to irrigated alfalfa in this part of the State, especially in the Milk River valley, caused by an ice covering in December and early in January. The exact extent of this damage cannot be ascertained until growth starts. Range conditions have been excellent for the past six weeks. Before that time there was a month when range on the prairie was covered with an ice sheet. This ice did not form in the mountains. Civil Works Administration workers have been here since December 2. On only one day has the weather been too severe for outside work.

JUDITH BASIN:

The mild almost springlike weather that has characterized the present winter continued unabated through the first three weeks of February. During the last week of the month there was a light fall of snow accompanied by some of the coldest weather of the winter. Zero and lower temperatures were reached on six days, with the coldest of the winter, -22°, on the 25th. By the 28th temperatures had risen appreciably and most of the snow had disappeared. There was very little wind movement during the month, and soil blowing did but little damage. Winter wheat appears to be in good condition in this section of central Montana.

Maximum temperature, 62°; minimum, -22°; precipitation, 0.43 inch.

HUNTLEY:

The unusually mild weather of January extended into February and continued until the 22nd. Following that date the temperature dropped rapidly, reaching the minimum for the month and for the winter, so far, of -20° the 26th. Light snowfall accompanied the dropping temperatures, and on the date when the minimum was reached the ground was covered with snow to a depth of 3 inches. This snow blanket appears to have been ample protection from the severe cold to winter wheat and rye, which had started spring growth earlier in the month. The weather has again warmed up to the extent that the snow has all melted and the ground is dry. Soil and weather conditions throughout the month have been favorable for out of door work, and many farmers have done plowing and other field work in connection with the preparation of seed beds. Although precipitation has been light, there appears to be a fair amount of moisture in the soil for winter wheat, and the crop looks well on all seeding methods. Wind movement has been low, and no soil blowing of any consequence has been reported for this part of the State. Maximum temperature, 70°; minimum, -20°; precipitation, 0.33 inch.

SHERIDAN:

The month was the second warmest February recorded here, only February in 1926 being warmer. For the first 15 days the average mean temperature was about 7° higher than for any similar period recorded here. The last half of the month was more nearly normal in temperature, with a few cold days. Wind movement for the month was low also, and precipitation was low. Fall grain still appears to be in good condition. Much of the shelter-belt and fruit stock, however, appeared to be almost ready to come into leaf before the cold weather. Grass was beginning to show quite green, and many weeds had started. Grasshoppers had also begun to appear in many localities. So far this winter there has not been enough cold weather for cutting and storing natural ice. It appears now that it will be necessary to store artificial ice, if any. A minimum of feeding has been required for livestock for which range was available.

DICKINSON:

Mild, dry, pleasant weather continued during the first three weeks of February, then a cold wave covered the area for a week. A maximum of 54° was recorded, and the minimum was -25° on the 25th. The mean temperature of 23.6° was 10.5° above the normal. This was the mildest February since 1931, and in only 3 of the past 20 years has it been as mild as in 1934. Precipitation of 0.05 inch was the lowest since 1920 and only 3 in 43 years have had less precipitation. The mild weather was of great benefit to livestock, since feed is becoming very scarce in the district. Some thistles were raked and burned during the month.

MANDAN:

The past winter has been mild for the most part. The first half of December was mild, but the last half was fairly cold, with a low of -24°. January was mild with a low of -12°. The first half of February was very mild, but the last half was colder with a few days of below zero temperatures and a low of -22°. The precipitation for the winter was light. About 5 inches of snow fell in December. Very little snow fell in January and February. The precipitation for 1933 was 11.91 inches. The most rain that fell in any 24-hour period was 0.65 inch in April. The summer months were hot with low precipitation, and crop production was in most cases the lowest of record. Wheat averaged 1 bushel per acre, corn 8.3 bushels, oats 2.5, and barley 2.8. Wheat averaged 2.7 bushels per acre on fallow, 2.8 on green manure, 1.3 on spring plowing, and on disked corn ground it was a failure. In the forage crops Dakota Amber sorgo made the highest yield, 3,500 pounds per acre. In the silage trial Rainbow flint made the highest yield, 3.86 tons silage weight and 1.74 tons air-dried. In the grasses, crested wheatgrass, planted in 1915, gave the highest yield, 1,414 pounds per acre. For the month of February the maximum temperature was 56°, the minimum -22°, and there was 0.05 inch of precipitation.

BELLE FOURCHE:

February was extremely dry and mild. A number of light flurries of snow were received, but there was only one instance in which the precipitation amounted to more than a trace, and the total for the month was next to the lowest on record for February. Abnormally warm weather prevailed during the greater part of the month. The daily maximum temperatures for the first 20 days ranged from 36° to 66°, and the mean temperature for the same period was 35°. The following week was much colder, and the temperature fell below zero on three successive days, the lowest temperature of the season, -26°, being recorded on February 25. The cold wave was terminated abruptly on

February 27, when the temperature rose 65° in less than 12 hours. The mean temperature for the month was 29°, which is 8° greater than the 25-year average for February. Strong winds have been of frequent occurrence, but very little soil blowing has taken place. The dry, windy weather has been unfavorable to fall grain, and rabbits have destroyed all growth above ground on the winter wheat and rye plots. The soil, however, has been too dry since the date of seeding for much of the fall grain to germinate, except on summer-fallowed land.

Maximum temperature, 66°; minimum, -26°; precipitation, 0.03 inch.

ARCHER:

During the first 20 days of February the temperatures were mild. During the night of February 25 the thermometer registered -13°. However, by the last of the month the temperatures had become milder and the weather had taken on the appearance of early spring. Rain and snow during the night of February 9 broke the drought. Since that date 0.88 inch of precipitation has occurred, which is the largest amount for February since the station was established. Soil blowing occurred one afternoon for a few hours. The precipitation was a welcome feature in that the snow remained pretty much where it fell and served as a covering to winter cereals during the cold weather. Winter cereals that survived the dry weather were greatly benefited by the moisture. Since the storms were not severe there was not much damage to livestock, in fact watering places will be improved. At this writing a considerable portion of the snow has melted and the fields are muddy. The C.W.A. work progressed until February 22. Since then seed cleaning has been in progress.

Maximum temperature, 67°; minimum, -13°; precipitation, 0.88 inch.

AKRON:

The weather during February was a sharp break from that during the preceding portion of the winter. Also the February weather was out of line with what experience has led one to expect. The winter's coldest weather was experienced the night of the 25th when the temperature descended to -10°. However, the cold spell was very short. Precipitation was recorded on nine days. There was rain on two of these days, the 6th and the 17th. Most of the precipitation in the form of snow which melted within a few days after falling. There is no snow remaining on the ground March 1.

Maximum temperature, 58°; minimum, -10°; precipitation, 0.91 inch.

NORTH PLATTE:

The mild open weather that prevailed through January continued until February 22. A storm beginning on that date closed a very unusual mid-winter period of 55 days during which the minimum temperature did not fall below 10° and for the most did not fall below 20°. The five-day period February 22 to 26 was the first sample of real winter for the season to date. Snow falling for three days produced a depth of 4 inches and brought the precipitation for the month to 0.52 inch. The snowfall was followed by wind and drifting that made the distribution very uneven. Sub-zero temperatures, the first of the winter to date, were recorded on three days, with the low mark at -18°. The month closed with two days of rising temperatures with the snow rapidly disappearing.

COLBY:

February was unusually warm and pleasant with no very high winds. The first three weeks were very spring like, and winter wheat fields greened up as they usually do in April. Precipitation was recorded on nine days, most of it in the form of snow, but there were two light showers. The only cold weather this year came during the last week when the temperature went down to -11° one night. That was the only zero weather this winter. There was no soil blowing. The moisture was very beneficial to the wheat. Growing as it was during the warm weather, it was beginning to use up the surface soil moisture. Maximum temperature, 68°; minimum, -11°; precipitation, 0.87 inch; snow, 10.5 inches.

HAYS:

Except for a 3-inch snow the 11th, which melted in a day, the first 17 days of the month were sunny, mild, and quiet. It was real spring time weather, pleasant, and favorable for tillage and all kinds of outside work. This was followed, however, by a 10-day period of lower temperature, February 18 to 27, inclusive, most of which time the sky was overcast and a little moisture in the form of snow, fell nearly every day. The heaviest snow fall for any one day was 2.5 inches February 21. During the 10-day period there was a total of 6.7 inches. Most of the snow fell quietly but was drifted by a light wind after it fell, which left about 2 inches on the bare fields, 2 to 8 inches on stubble fields, and more in low places and weed patches. The temperature dropped to -6° the morning of the 26th, the first time the temperature has reached zero this winter. The ground is covered with snow at the end of the month. Despite the short cold spell and snow, February has added another month of generally mild weather to our winter record. The condition of winter wheat is normal. The wheat made considerable growth during the first half of the month, except on the poorer fields discussed in previous reports as having difficulty emerging. Such wheat has made little progress and still looks unpromising. Maximum temperature, 72°; minimum, -6°; precipitation, 1.16 inches; total snow, 9.7 inches. Temperature correction for January, 1934, report - Mean temperature for January 36.2°, or 6.5° above normal.

TUCUMCARI:

February was warm, calm, and dry. Precipitation totaling 0.15 inch was the first received since late November. Total since the close of August has been 1.52 inches. Wind movement averaged only 4.7 miles, extremely low for this time of year. The mean temperature, 44.5°, was considerably above the long-time February mean. Absolute maximum for the month was 80°; absolute minimum, 8°. Outside work was possible throughout the month, with no delay due to climatic conditions. Most station fences have been replaced, gravel has been hauled to driveways, and a large amount of clay and caliche hauled to roadways. Wheat once established is holding on remarkably well on the plains section of the county. Many late planted fields show no germination, and others where plants soon suffered from drought show complete death of plants. Ranges are fair and livestock is in good condition.

DALHART:

The mild winter weather continued throughout the month, although the latter part of the month gave the lowest temperature of the winter. The minimum of 6° on the morning of the 26th was 5° colder than the previous low for the winter. There were three showers and a trace of snow during the month. Soil blowing was serious on several days and was especially severe on the 17th and 24th. Drifting of soil into the station fence rows was especially

bad on the 17th. This was from the north and was the first time that large soil drifts have accumulated along the north fence. In spite of dry soil and rather frequent winds, the winter wheat and rye on the station is holding on remarkably well.

Maximum temperature, 79°; minimum, 6°; precipitation, 0.34 inch.

BIG SPRING:

Although the lowest temperature of the winter was recorded during February, the weather as a whole was very mild. There were two rather hard sandstorms during the month, but little or no soil movement occurred on the station. The warm weather of February has caused the Chinese elms and some peach and pear varieties to bud out. A freeze now would finish them for this year. Station work has consisted of listing increase fields for milo and Sumac sorgo for the cattle feeding work. Pruning grapes, fruit trees, shade trees, and shrubs occupied considerable time during the month. J. M. Jones, Chief of the Animal Husbandry Division of Texas A. & M. College, visited the station February 19.

Maximum temperature, 81°; minimum 14°; precipitation, 0.56 inch.

LAWTON:

Although the mean temperature in February was 7° below normal, there were no winter storms of much consequence in the southwestern part of the State. The monthly maximum temperature of 78° was recorded February 3, and the monthly minimum temperature of 14° was recorded on the 25th. From the 19th to the 28th the weather was generally threatening and disagreeable. The winter snowfall to date has consisted of only a few flurries. A strong wind from the north attained a rather high velocity on three dates in February, but no soil blowing occurred. Five rains from the 7th to the 28th inclusive, totaled 2.18 inches. In each case the rainfall was gentle, and but little water was lost by run-off. Wheat, barley, and volunteer oats crops are in good shape. Spring seedings of oats made as early as February 6 have not emerged. Temperatures that did not get above freezing on the 25th and 26th appear to have done no damage to the sprouted grain that is nearly ready to emerge. The acreage seeded to oats this year will be much larger than usual. Soil moisture conditions are very good, and tillage operations progress very satisfactorily.

WOODWARD:

February was characterized by 16 days of cloudy and foggy weather. Six showers and snows, however, totaled only 0.50 inch precipitation. For the most part the weather was mild and quiet for the season, with few low temperatures and little high wind. In fact soil movement from blowing has been less to date than usual. Surface moisture has been sufficient to keep wheat in good healthy condition, but it has made little growth. Spring flowering trees and shrubs have been on the verge of budding out several times during February. However, intermittent freezing temperatures have held them back, and, from a recent check up, it was found that many peach and other fruit buds are still alive. Station work for the month consisted of grading land and roads, digging and packing nursery stock, pruning grapes, making cuttings, repairing machinery, and cleaning up other work preparatory to spring farming.

Maximum temperature, 83°; minimum, 6°; precipitation, 0.50 inch.

NOTE: The weekly edition of the News Letter will be resumed on April 14. The letter for that date should cover the period April 1 to 14.

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